

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

DATE, TIME AND

PLACE OF MEETING:

Tuesday, January 20, 2005, 8:45 a.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS AND OTHERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Members: Jim Hewitt, Thomas Laging, V.J. Nelson, Patrick O'Donnell and Kim Todd present.
Karen Kilgarin and Jeff Searcy absent.

Others: Lynn Johnson and Jerry Shorney (Parks and Recreation); Bob Ripley (Capitol Administration); Kent Morgan, Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Dept.)

STATED PURPOSE

OF THE MEETING:

Regular Meeting of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

Mr. Laging called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Approval of meeting notes of December 7, 2004

Hewitt moved approval of the December 7, 2004 meeting notes, seconded by Nelson. Motion carried 5-0. Hewitt, Laging, Nelson, O'Donnell, and Todd voting 'yes'; Searcy and Kilgarin absent.

Update on Downtown master Plan and recommendations on concepts (Kent Morgan, Planning Dept.)

Kent Morgan stated that he is here today to listen to the dialogue of the Commission members regarding the Downtown Master Plan and forward any recommendations to the consultants.

Nelson commented on the disrepair of the sidewalks on Centennial Mall. Jerry Shorney of Parks Dept. stated that they have done some work on the north end. They have taken out the tree boxes and added dirt to the exposed roots. The footings are also in for the placement of the Tem and Ptah sculptures.

Zimmer stated that the biggest recommendations from the consultants regarding Centennial Mall are greening it from one end to the other, having traffic from one end to the other, and moving the principle pedestrian and bike paths to the center.

Laging commented that a pivotal point of the downtown plan is the retail strategy which currently hinges on the removal of the Museum of Nebraska History. It seems that the retail strategy is the issue driving the recommendation to open the north end of the Mall. If the retail strategy holds, he believes the Commission would entertain a more serious look at opening it up. If the Historical Society relocates, then the retail strategy may be right strategy. Hewitt pointed out that he believes there is not a desire by the Historical Society Board to relocate. He also noted that the Foundation, which owns the former Plasma Center Building on the corner of 15th and O, is meeting on February 4th to decide the fate of that building. There has been some discussion on selling that building to the federal government.

Lynn Johnson stated that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee have recommended that the two blocks on the north end remain pedestrian only. They were not in favor of creating pedestrian traffic down the middle.

Bob Ripley commented that the issue of relocating the History Museum is huge. He hopes that if it is relocated, it remains close to the present location. There are dynamics that could affect the long-term use of the museum in terms of school tours. He feels the museum is a great anchor for the Mall. The Journalism School is a huge generator of traffic from campus on the Mall. Embracing the location of the University on the Mall is a good thing and should be respected.

Zimmer stated that Downtown Lincoln Association and particularly Updowntowners would like to engage the Commission in a discussion regarding returning the event space location to Centennial Mall.

Zimmer noted that he is sensing that there is consensus from the Commission that the Mall should not be opened up to traffic. There was agreement from the Commission. He then asked about the Commission's feeling on vehicular traffic in the P to Q block. There was general agreement that they would not consider that.

Todd made a motion (seconded by Nelson) that the so-called 'Laging Plan', the 2003 plan for the renovation of Centennial Mall, be incorporated into the Downtown Master Plan and that a funding strategy be developed involving the identified partners. Motion carried 5-0. Hewitt, Laging, Nelson, O'Donnell, and Todd voting 'yes'; Searcy and Kilgarin absent.

Laging stated that one of the most important things is to move this project up on the priority list and get it in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Morgan suggested that the Downtown Master Plan be an agenda item for the next Commission meeting.

Miscellaneous

No discussion took place under this agenda item.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 a.m.